

PANTEG URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Medical Officer's Annual Report.

The Medical Officer's Annual Report, read at the last meeting of the above Council, was as follows:—

Gentlemen.—One hundred and three deaths occurred in the above district during the year ending December 31st, 1894:—Males, 51; females, 52. Under 1 year, 24; at 1 year and under 5 years, 23; 5 years and under 15 years, 3; 15 years and under 25 years, 2; 25 years and under 65 years, 28; 65 years and upwards, 23. In the first quarter, 35; second do., 28; third do., 21; fourth do., 19.

These deaths occurred from the following causes:

	Griffiths-	Llan-	Total	Total
	Panteg town	vibangel		1893
Scarlet fever	0	0	0	3
Diphtheria	0	0	0	1
Typhoid fever	0	0	0	1
Puerperal	0	0	0	1
Diarrhoea & Dysentery	0	0	0	2
Rheum. fever	0	0	0	2
Phthisis	7	0	7	6
Bronchitis				
Pneumonia, Pleurisy	18	3	21	27
Croup	3	0	3	0
Measles	5	1	6	0
Whooping Cough	6	1	7	0
Heart disease	5	0	5	5
Injuries	1	0	1	5
All other Diseases	57	7	64	43

The death-rate for the year was 16.3 per 1,000 per annum. The zymotic death-rate for the year was 2.2 per 1,000 per annum.

Births.—Panteg, 220; Workhouse, 8. Of those in Panteg 103 were males and 117 females. The birth-rate for the year for Panteg was 34.8 per 1,000 per annum.

WORKHOUSE.

Twenty-five deaths occurred in the Workhouse during the year ending December 31st, 1894. Under 1 year, 2; at 1 year and under 5 years, 5; at 5 years and under 15 years, 0; at 15 years and under 25 years, 0; at 25 years and under 65 years, 7; at 65 years and upwards, 13. They occurred from the following causes:—Diarrhoea and dysentery, 1; phthisis, 5; bronchitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy, 8; heart disease, 3; all other diseases, 8.

SANITARY WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR 1894.

Nuisances.—With regard to the nuisances, I may say that when any nuisance occurred it was attended to as soon as possible.

Drainage.—Improvements of the drainage systems were made at New Inn, Cwmyniscioy, and Pontymoil during the year.

Certificates of Infectious Diseases.—Eighteen certificates of infectious diseases were received during the year.

Houses Disinfected.—Fifteen houses were disinfected, and the bedclothing, &c., destroyed in the smallpox case.

Inspections.—The district has been regularly and minutely inspected.

Milk.—Twenty-two samples of milk were analysed, and the cowsheds, dairies, and utensils examined.

GENERAL REVIEW OF THE HEALTH OF THE YEAR 1894.

Death Rate.—I beg to lay before you my 10th Annual Report, and have much pleasure in drawing your attention to the low death-rate of this year (16.3) which is, notwithstanding the depressed state of the times, the lowest that has been recorded in this district. (The average death-rate for England and Wales was 19.2 per 1,000 in 1893; the zymotic death-rate 2.47 per 1,000 for the same period.)

The zymotic death-rate has also remained low, although we have had mild outbreaks of scarlet fever, measles, and whooping cough.

The birth-rate is not so high as that of last year.

Infantile Mortality has increased since last year (last year being an exceptionally low death-rate). Measles and whooping cough contributed largely to this; but I also attribute the increase to the difficulty which in my mind have had to obtain the necessities of life during the past year. There are also many mothers so deficient in that knowledge and education which prepares for "self-preservation," that undoubtedly the introduction into our schools of classes on domestic hygiene would be of great benefit, so as not to leave the care of the health of the body to the chance of a few lectures in after years. There is a great opportunity here for those ladies who are interesting themselves on behalf of the poor to visit their homes, and advise them on domestic hygiene and the proper feeding of children.

Class I.—Diseases of the Respiratory Organs.—The diseases under this heading have decreased, but the majority of the deaths of the whole community were caused by these diseases.

Class II.—Epidemic Diseases (a).—No cases of diphtheria were reported during the year.

Scarlet Fever (b).—Twelve cases of scarlet fever occurred, none of which were fatal. They were chiefly isolated cases, cropping up in different parts of the district at different times, and from which no epidemic occurred. One case occurred in a house where there had been a case three months previously, and three of the cases afterwards occurred amongst the relations. In several instances I traced the infection to neighbouring districts, and I consider that partly owing to the good sanitary condition of the district and partly to the way in which the cases were looked after no epidemic occurred.

Measles.—A severe epidemic of measles occurred at Griffithstown in February last, when the managers of the schools closed the schools, and the epidemic ceased. Outbreaks also occurred about the same time at the Race and Maund's-row. The epidemic lasted about four weeks. Through no certificates reaching me, it was some time before I was aware of the outbreak in Griffithstown. I recommend that the Council should pay for the first five certificates of measles, as formerly. A slight outbreak broke out at the Race in November last, when two cases occurred.

Whooping Cough (c).—Some cases of whooping cough occurred in the district during the past year, 8 being fatal. There has been for some years an increase in deaths under this heading, sufficient attention not having been given to this disease, which is by no means of such a mild character as is generally supposed. I recommend that this disease for a time should be included amongst those to be notified; in Aberdeen, where this has been done, it has been stamped out.

Influenza (c).—I am glad to say no deaths occurred under this heading, although we have had a few outbreaks of the disease. The outbreaks were of a milder character than on former occasions. The drains should be always examined when influenza occurs.

Typhoid Fever (f).—No death occurred from typhoid fever. A mild case was reported. The drainage at the spot was improved and the sewer ventilated.

Continued and Puerperal Fever (g).—No death occurred from these fevers.

Smallpox (h).—Three cases of smallpox were reported from the Workhouse and one from the Lower Race. The infection was introduced into the Workhouse by tramps; and in the case at the Lower Race the infection was contracted at Celynen. The last case was removed to the infectious hospital at the Workhouse; the bedding and clothes burnt, and the house thoroughly disinfected—and the infection did not spread. As smallpox is chiefly introduced into districts by vagrants, and 3,316 vagrants having passed through the district last year, being an increase of 1,105 on the previous year, I would therefore strongly recommend to the authorities of the Workhouse that vagrants should be restrained in the power of carrying infection about the county, especially at epidemic times; that they should be made to report their movements; and that they should, when requisite, be subject to detention, re-vaccination, and disinfection; and that no person should be allowed to attend upon a smallpox patient who has not been re-vaccinated. (It was an error to have placed an inmate in charge of a serious case of infective disease like smallpox.) I would also point out that the infectious disease hospital at the Workhouse is too near to the main building to put smallpox patients in with safety to the remaining paupers. Extensive alterations are about to be carried out here, and I hope this point will be considered. One of the lessons taught by the recent smallpox outbreak at Marybourne and Leicester is the value of vaccination, and especially re-vaccination. The vaccinated children had a twenty-fold immunity from smallpox and a four hundred and eighty-fold security against death from smallpox; and at Leicester, out of 347 cases of smallpox, there has not been a single case of a vaccinated child under ten years of age treated for smallpox at the hospital. The unvaccinated children suffered most severely, 88 out of 105 were severe or very severe cases—16 dying; and vaccination has saved millions of lives, and preserved the beauty of millions more. We must not, therefore, be led into the error of not making ourselves proof against the infection of smallpox. The number of unvaccinated people amongst us is increasing every day, and is becoming a serious factor for the future, as should an outbreak of smallpox take place, the seriousness of the epidemic depends in a great measure upon the number of unprotected people in our midst. It would also be a wise protection if all children on going to school, who had not a satisfactory mark of vaccination, were re-vaccinated; and wherever the protective power of early vaccination has become weakened, re-vaccination should be carried out.

Class III.—Tuberculous Diseases.—There is a slight increase in cases of consumption compared with that of last year, but the deaths under this heading are lower than on former years. It cannot be too widely known that phthisis is infectious, and the material containing infective bacilli is the expectoration of the patient. This material often dries and powders up, and is distributed as dust, which is inhaled by other persons; therefore, all rags, handkerchiefs, or clothes receiving expectorations should be afterwards burnt; and the habit of spitting on the floors in private or public places cannot be too quickly discontinued.

Drainage.—The drainage and sanitary condition of the following premises have been improved:—The Rising Sun, New Inn; the Wheat Sheaf, Cwmyniscioy; and the Oddfellows' Arms, Pontymoil. The various drainage systems, flushing apparatus and ventilators of the district have been acting well during the past year.

I recommend that all the old closets with the grating, at the bottom of Cwmyniscioy, be done away with, as it is impossible to keep them from getting fouled. I am glad to find that the Board favours the erection at Pontymoil of sewage works on the International system. For the new drainage system at the Cwm I would also recommend that manholes and examination places be introduced more frequently than has been done in our other systems. According to a recent decision by Mr Justice Collins, it was decided that "the pipe which receives the drainage from several houses is not a drain but a sewer, and has to be maintained by the sanitary authority." It is very necessary that one house one drain should be insisted on, and that no joint drain should be allowed except under public places. Disconnecting traps should be insisted on upon each house drain near its connection to the sewer, in addition to the syphon under w.c.; and all house drains should be ventilated whether there is an outside w.c. or not. In the new drainage that is to be laid down I recommend that the house drains to the sewer should be according to Dr Hingworth's system, so as to discharge their contents below the sewer level at the very base of the sewer. The sewer and drain junctions themselves thus form an interceptor trap, which entirely prevents the sewer air from entering the drains, and thus removes all possibility of the passage of infective material from one house to another by means of the drainage system. This system is carried out with success and benefit to the public health at Birmingham. The cremation of sewer gas should also be carried out at the upper end of the sewer, thereby destroying instead of dispersing the germs in the sewer air, and materially lessening the cause of diphtheria, which is greatly influenced by the spread of microbes from sewer gas and from foul odours.

Water.—The water mains from the Folly spring have been laid on to New Inn and Sebastopol, completing at last the water supply of the district. A good and plentiful supply now exists in every part of the district, and I recommend that the wells in the above districts should be closed.

Houses.—I cannot help noticing with regret that many of the new houses erected in our district are built so irregularly as to interfere and shut out the sunlight from their neighbours, which is a great error. Many new houses also are tenanted far too quickly after being built. I therefore recommend that no new house should be allowed to be inhabited until it has been passed and certified by the surveyor.

Scavenging.—The scavenging of the main streets and roads has been regularly carried out. The more frequently this can be done the less likely perfect cleanliness will take place, and disease ensue. Some of the back streets require looking after, and cesspools should be emptied every three months.

Slaughterhouses.—The slaughterhouses have been examined. More frequent whitewashing is desirable as well as being required by the Act.

Milk.—The milk supply of the district has been carefully examined and tested, and again I consider it to be of good quality and above the average; but I believe the supply is not equal to the demand. I have a difficulty in getting a complete list of those selling milk; as many are not registered. The physical characters & the reaction of the milk were all normal; the specific gravity varied, from 1030 to 1035, being more equal and showing a general improvement on last year. The percentage of cream varied from 8 to 14, satisfactory, but there were no high percentages of cream as last year. The dairies, where there are any, were satisfactory, but the cowsheds generally want more frequent whitewashing and cleaning, and no manure should be allowed to remain within 40 yards of the cowhouse. As milk is able to convey consumption, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, diphtheria, etc., it is most necessary that the sanitary protection of the milk traffic should be carefully looked after.

MILK ANALYSIS.													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Reaction	Alkaline	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Specific gravity	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031	1031
Percentage of cream	14	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Physical character	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Dairy	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Cowhouse	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light	Requires whitewash and light
Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light	Requires liming and more light

SCHOOLS.			
District	Area—square ft.	Average attendance	Drainage
Pontymoil	3885	412	Satisfactory
Sebastopol	2892	256	Fairly good
Griffithstown	8478	340	Satisfactory
Llanvihangel-Pontymoil	12870	31	Satisfactory
			Improved
			Improvements under consideration
			Much improved
			Window

Schools.—I have examined the different schools, and have received the usual statistics from the masters. The ventilation of Pontymoil has been improved. Further improvement in the ventilation is necessary at Sebastopol, and increased closet accommodation. The drainage should not empty into the brook at Mamhilad. With these exceptions, the general condition of the schools is satisfactory. Special attention is called to the incidence of diphtheria in children attending school, as apart from the age susceptibility (3 to 12 years), school attendance increases the risk of personal infection; therefore all children suffering from sore throat, which commonly is prevalent with true diphtheria, should at once be sent home. It is generally conceded that there should be an increase in the school space per child to the extent that for each child there should be an average of 18 square ft. of superficial floor space, so as to ensure good health for the coming generation.

CONCLUSION.—And in conclusion, I consider—from the absence of deaths from scarlet fever, continued and puerperal fevers, diarrhoea, and especially typhoid fever; from the diminution of the infectious diseases certificates from 93 last year to 18 this year; from the better supply of water and milk; from the well working of the various drainage systems, ventilators and flushing apparatus—this district to be in good order, and that we have satisfactorily advanced through another year. In coming to this conclusion I do not do so through relying implicitly on the low general death-rate (much of which might be climatic), but I do so on the zymotic death-rate, and especially on the absence, in so large and varied a district, of the above diseases to so remarkable a degree. I sincerely hope that the community will not relax in any way from taking the proper precautions against zymotic diseases; and I again emphasise that three weeks after measles and six weeks after scarlet fever, is the least possible isolation recommended by the Local Government Board, by the regulations for those in charge of infectious diseases hospitals, and by the highest authorities in the medical profession.

I beg to thank the officers of this Council for their kind co-operation during the past year, and for their kind assistance in helping me to prevent preventable disease and to make things sweeter, cleaner, and healthier in regard to the inhabitants, their homes, and this country generally.

I am, gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
J. R. ESSEX,
Medical Officer of Health,
Panteg District Council.

February 12th, 1895.

